The visit to China of the Papal Legate Charles Thomas Maillard de Tournon 1705-1710 was a decisive turning point both in the history of Christian missions in China and the history of the Society of Jesus. The Legate succeeded not only in imposing his negative views about Chinese rituals for ancestors and Confucius but also contributed to the vilification of the Jesuits that led to their suppression later in the century. The German Jesuit Kilian Stumpf was a privileged observer of these events, particularly those in Beijing, the Chinese capital, but also through his extensive correspondence in the rest of China. He worked directly for the Chinese Emperor Kangxi as director of the imperial glassworks. He was designated as the procurator or negotiator with the Legate on behalf of his Jesuit companions; he lived in the same house as the Legate during his period at the court and as a papal notary kept a daily record of events and copies of key documents in a huge document sent in sections to Rome, the Acta Pekinensia.

Here, for the first time, this neglected document is provided in an annotated English translation. It should be of value to historians of the Catholic Church, sinologists and students of religion, but it also presents a good story full of fascinating personalities and events.